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Dear Public Health Committee:

I am a medical oncologist in Portland, Oregon who wants you on the Connecticut Public Health Committee to know about my and my patients' experience with Oregon's aid in dying law initially passed by the voters here in 1997.

At the time of the law's passage, I was a somewhat tepid supporter of it, not having real knowledge of its positive impact in helping patients and their families traverse the end of their lives.

In the last 17 years, I have seen end of life care here in Oregon dramatically improve for everyone, which I attribute at least in part to our aid in dying law. For many of my patients, just having an aid in dying law in place, even if they had no plan to use the law to hasten death, is a genuine comfort. For patients who choose to use the law (and their families), I have been impressed how much relief, peace, and even meaning our law has seemed to provide at the end of life.

Though it takes some time for doctors to become comfortable talking with patients about aid in dying, here in Oregon I am not aware of ANY abuse of the law since enactment 17 years ago.

We Oregonians can be a bit chauvinistic about our state, but I know it goes beyond that description when patients tell me, as has happened on regular basis since 1997, that "I am so glad that I live in Oregon" because our state has an aid in dying law. I encourage your committee to consider the benefits of such a law for your citizens as well.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Menashe, MD